



MISSISSIPPI MUSEUM *of* ART
380 South Lamar Street
Jackson, Mississippi 39201

For Immediate Release
Date: July 10, 2009

Media Contact: Emmie King
eking@msmuseumart.org
601.960.1515

Mississippi Museum of Art Presents
Ed McGowin: Name Change

(Jackson, Miss.) . . . It's hard enough being one person let alone twelve. After thirty-five years of creating and personifying twelve very distinctive personalities, Mississippi expatriate artist Ed McGowin has produced a remarkable body of work that is rich in history and remarkable in complexity. Given that the Museum is dedicated to presenting exhibitions by Mississippi artists, it is fitting to present works from all twelve of Ed's assumed personas in his home state.

Nearly forty works by the artist who lives and works in New York will be on view August 1 through November 29, 2009 at the Mississippi Museum of Art. *Name Change: One Artist—Twelve Personas—Thirty-five Years* is an exhibition that began as a project to reject the traditional art historical concept of identifying a creator's work in a single, linear progression in favor of a pluralistic model. Beginning in 1971, the artist legally changed his name twelve times over a period of eighteen months. He developed distinctively diverse bodies of work in various media under each of the following names: Alva Isaiah Fost; Lawrence Steven Orlean; Irby Benjamin Roy; Nathan Ellis McDuff; Euri Ignatius Everpure; Isaac Noel Anderson; Nicholas Gregory Nazianzen; Thorton Modestus Dossett; Ingram Andrew Young; Melvill Douglas O'Connor; Edward Everett Updike; and William Edward McGowin. The resulting divergent images were presented in the exhibition *Name Change* at the Baltimore Museum of Art in 1972. Though a small showing solely of Dossett's art

was exhibited at the Mississippi Museum of Art in 2000, no showing inclusive of all the personas has been seen here.

Faithful to his credo, McGowin has continued to create art under the aforementioned personas to this day. The current *Name Change* was initiated in 2006 as a touring exhibition, with an accompanying book by the Mobile Museum of Art, not only to revisit the artist's original concept but also to examine the directions it has taken over more than three decades. *Name Change* follows in McGowin's chosen path of unpredictability in that it is never the same at any two venues. At the participating museums, the artist and curators select which pieces from McGowin's personas to include, thus ensuring that the size, scope, and focus of *Name Change* is never repeated.

"Ed McGowin has to be included in any serious conversation about significant American post-modern artists because he has been so influential and innovative for four decades. While other artists work to develop and follow an artistic voice under their own name, McGowin has somehow done that for a dozen personas. His career may have blossomed in New York and Washington, but he's truly a Southern original," stated Deputy Director for Programs, Dan Piersol.

One of the most compelling works on view is a large painted wood sculpture created under the pseudonym of T. M. Dossett. This pertinent narrative work trace the interrelationship of three renowned Mississippi musicians: Robert Johnson, the foremost developer of the Delta Blues; Jimmie Rodgers, the father of Country Music; and Elvis Presley, who synthesized those two styles into Rock n' Roll. As McGowin has stated,

The Dossett work refers in large part to race relations and the issues and events surrounding race relations... (and) growing up in the South. The contradictions, irony, fear, anger, etc. that effected [sic] me as a white male in a society that was going through a profound and fundamental change is something that I feel compelled to express.

A Hattiesburg, Mississippi native, McGowin has developed his art over a career spanning more than forty years. The Mississippi Museum of Art is delighted to welcome him home and honored to present such an important living artist to our community.

Museum hours: Tuesday through Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Sunday noon until 5 p.m., closed Mondays. Museum admission: \$5 for adults, \$4 for seniors (60+), \$3 for students, free for children 5 years of age and under, and free for

Mississippi Museum of Art members. Students receive free admission on Trustmark Free Tuesdays and Blue Cross Free Thursdays.

The Mississippi Museum of Art and its programs are sponsored in part by the city of Jackson and the Jackson Convention & Visitors Bureau. Support is also provided in part by funding from the Mississippi Arts Commission, a state agency, and in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

For more information about *Name Change: One Artist—Twelve Personas—Thirty-five Years* contact Dan Piersol at 601-960-1515 or email dpiersol@msmuseumart.org. For more information about the Mississippi Museum of Art call 601-960-1515 or 1-866-VIEW ART, or visit the web at www.msmuseumart.org.

#####